



## **REPORT OF THE FOUNTAIN WORKING GROUP Update on the Jubilee Fountain for Royal Tunbridge Wells**

### **Working Group Membership:**

Michael Holman (Chair):  
John Cunningham:  
Jane Fenwick:  
John Forster:  
Councillor Tracy Moore:  
Altan Omer:

### **Interim report to RTW Town Forum Meeting 26 January 2012:**

1. Everyone to whom I have spoken (Councillors, Council employees, ordinary Town Forum members, representatives of local community organisations and members of the general public) have welcomed the proposal that Tunbridge Wells should try to mark the Jubilee and London Olympics Year with the installation of a fountain/water feature. They also all recognise that the chances of actually realising this aim before the end of the Jubilee year are pretty slim.
2. In order for our RTWTF fountain initiative to be taken seriously, it is imperative not only that wide support be generated among those who live in the town, but also that the proposal be placed firmly on the agenda of the different groups seeking to develop the town centre (TWBC, Town Centre Area Action Plan, Council Leader's Town Plan Panel, RTW Town Forum etc.) Only then will the corporate support, which is, I sense, already present, be able to grow. What initially might appear to be an ad hoc proposal must become a sine qua non of the way in which planners think about our town centre's future development.
3. The general opinion seems to be that we should opt for a 'pavement' type installation with (illuminated?) water jets operating at pavement level on a site in a central area of high footfall. We need, therefore, to consider locations within the town centre. Site ownership (private, TWBC, KCC etc) will be critical as will other existing or mooted development plans for potential sites. Site suggestions received so far include (in no particular order):
  - Five Ways (a watery curtain for the Millennium Clock?);
  - the Pantiles (Union Square or Bath Square adjacent to the Chalybeate Spring);
  - Calverley Grounds;
  - the Calverley Street Pedestrian Precinct just before the Monson Road/Camden Road traffic lights;
  - outside the coffee shop 'Ismail' (former Habitat), Mount Pleasant Road;
  - between Pigwidgeon and Pye and Church Road adjacent to the Mount Pleasant Road traffic lights;

- in one of the grass islands on London Road, both north and south of Church Road;
  - outside the former (future?) Morrisons next to the railway station;
  - within the (eventually?) redeveloped cinema site on the corner of Church Road and Mount Pleasant Road;
  - in the centre of the crossroads where Mount Pleasant Road intersects with Church/Crescent Road (a real traffic stopper, this one!);
  - the gardens on Crescent Road adjacent to the Police Station – currently also site of the Wiesbaden sundial;
  - the corner of Monson Road and Mount Pleasant Road, currently the ecological herb garden.
4. The cost of any installation - initial capital investment and ongoing maintenance - would have to be borne by a combination of funding streams: private developer, sponsorship, public subscription, TWBC, Section 106 Funds etc. Initial capital costs are unlikely to be under £150,000. Firm commitment from TWBC will be paramount.
  5. A well-directed and sustained publicity campaign will be essential if we are to generate public interest and support and build up a head of steam which the planners will not be able to ignore. Indications are that the 'Courier' would be pleased, once our plans have taken on a little more substance, to run a piece on the fountain initiative and to give its support to the venture.
  6. A number of people have kindly supplied me with pictures of quite splendid fountains in the UK and Germany, also with informative websites (try googling 'Wiesbaden fountains' or go to <http://www.ocmis.com/project.php?id=42&cat=7>). For these I am most grateful, I am also most grateful to John Forster for his informed and challenging summary of sobering considerations.

This is a big project, one that should have been realised for the big anniversary of 2006. We will encounter all manner of arguments why this is something too big for Tunbridge Wells to manage. But nothing ventured, nothing gained, and who knows, this might be just the right time to give the town a lasting, hard memorial and one of which it can genuinely be proud, delighted rather than disgusted. It may take a long time, but a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.

Working Group members would very much welcome your responses to this interim report and Town Forum discussion – preferably by email.

**Michael Holman**  
January 2012